

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A method for a vendor to dispense postage over a network to a remote personal computer, the method comprising:

obtaining a meter license from the Post, said meter license being associated with a meter account assigned to the vendor, said meter account being maintained at a data center;

receiving, via the network, a transaction request for postage from a customer using the remote personal computer, said transaction request including information from the customer, said information corresponding to the transaction requested and payment method;

processing the requested transaction by requesting the data center to create evidence of postage payment and to account for the created evidence of postage payment in the meter account assigned to the vendor;

effecting payment for the transaction based on the information received from the customer;

receiving the evidence of postage payment created by the data center; and

sending the evidence of postage payment to the remote personal computer for use by the customer.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining an origin of deposit postal code for the requested transaction.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the information from the customer includes a username, password and credit card information whereby a personal account is established for subsequent transactions.

4-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the origin of deposit postal code is included in the information from the customer.

10. (Previously Presented) A method for a vendor to dispense postage to a remote personal computer via a network comprising:

receiving a request for postage from a customer using the remote personal computer coupled to the network;

processing the request for postage by requesting a data center to create evidence of postage payment and to account for the created evidence of postage payment in a postal account assigned to the vendor; and

sending the evidence of postage payment to the remote personal computer via the network for use by the customer.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the evidence of postage payment includes a transaction number.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein receiving a request for postage from a customer further comprises:

receiving information to identify the customer.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the information to identify the customer includes at least one of a user name and a password.

14. (Currently Amended) A system for dispensing postage over the Internet to a remote personal computer for printing, the system comprising:

a data center accessible over the Internet;

means at the data center for maintaining at least one metering account licensed to a vendor and maintained at the data center;

means at the data center for receiving over the Internet a request for postage, the request being initiated by a customer of the vendor using the remote personal computer;

means at the data center for generating evidence of postage payment in response to the request for postage; and

means at the data center for accounting for the generated evidence of postage payment in the metering account licensed to the vendor.